



Achieve with us.

“For people with intellectual, developmental and other life-affecting disabilities.”

February 23.2017

An Act Concerning the State Budget for The Department of Developmental Services,

Senator Formica, Ostern and Representative Walker and distinguished members of the Appropriations Committee, my name is Jamie Lazaroff I am a Self-Advocate Coordinator for The Arc Quinebaug Valley, a non-profit agency that provides support and advocacy for children and adults with Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities and their families, I am the Secretary to the Council on Developmental Services and I am also am a Board of Directions for Arc CT.

I am a Self-Advocate Coordinator for The Arc Quinebaug Valley, a non-profit agency that provides support and advocacy for children and adults with Intellectual/Developmental Disabilities and their families. I am the Secretary to the Council on Developmental Services and I am also a member of the Board of Directions for Arc CT. Despite being born with Developmental Disabilities I have reached for my dreams and in 1995 I was nominated for a New England Emmy Award. Right now I have 9 hours a week of residential supports in my home and 19.5 hrs. a week of personal supports in my job. I need supports to help me live past my basic needs. I need my staff to help me with my day to day life in order to be an active member of my community, to keep my job so I can help to support myself, and pay taxes.

We are pleased that the Governor's proposal budget includes positive steps to begin to address the residential waiting list crisis and to begin to stabilize community supports. These proposals indicate that Governor Malloy has heard our community on these issues and that he shares our belief that the current system can and must be improved. *This represents significant progress for people with I/DD!* At the same time his proposal contains cuts to other vital DDS community supports. What is most concerning is that there is no money for the 370 new graduates with I/DD in either year of the two year budget. These kids are our future and deserve the same rights and chance to dream as big as they can. Not to mention the families with the most severe cases. They will have to quit their job to take care of their sons or daughters.

Our other concerns are \$400,000 decrease to existing funding for Family Support Grants and No funds for caseload growth for the Behavioral Services Program.

I would like to quote your colleague Senator Ted Kennedy Jr. “We are advocating for civil rights, equality, self-determination, and dignity for all citizens of this great state. We deserve the right to live an independently as possible in our communities and not in an isolated, segregated, apartheid like environment.”

Thank you,
Jamie Lazaroff
Self-Advocate Coordinator, The Arc Quinebaug Valley
Secretary, Council on Developmental Services
Board of Directors, Arc CT